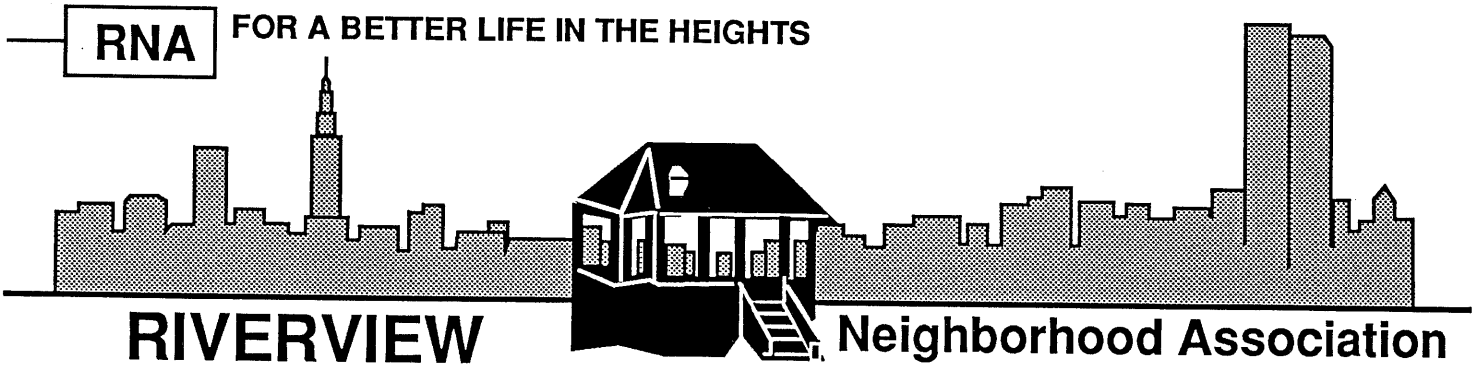
RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS



RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

December, 1999

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

PALISADE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Because of the importance of this issue, RNA is announcing two important public meetings:

RNA MEETING:

Tuesday, December 28th, 7:00 PM

Location:
HARBOR VIEW
HEALTH CARE CENTER
Corner of Franklin Street
& Ogden Avenue

PUBLIC HEARING:

Wednesday, January 5th, 7:00 PM

Location:
PUBLIC SCHOOL #8,
Auditorium
Hancock Avenue
& Franklin Street

The City has announced plans to revitalize Palisade Avenue. Many residents and local businesspeople have expressed concerns about the scale and scope of the project.

On Tuesday, December 28th, RNA will hold a special meeting to enable members to voice their opinions about this project. It is one of the intentions of this meeting to assemble a list of questions to present City officials at a public hearing that will be held on Wednesday, January 5th. At that hearing, City officials will present the data that has been compiled from the recent survey of the Palisade neighborhood in order to begin a dialogue with the community. The officals attending this hearing will include Robert Cotter and Douglas Greenfeld of the Planning Division and Councilpeople Tom DeGise, Bill Gaughan and Arnold Bettinger.

It is important that all residents attend one or both of these meetings.

RNA has included in this newsletter, an explanation from the City Planning Division, a summary of the redevelopment statute and a map of the Palisade Avenue study area.

Bret Schundler, Mayor
CITY OF JERSEY CITY

DEPARTMENT OF
Housing, Economic Development and Commerce
City Planning Division
30 Montgomery Street, Suite 416, Jersey City, N.J. 07302-3821
Phone: (201) 547-5010
Fax: (201) 547-4323

December 6, 1999

Re: Palisade Avenue Study Area

Dear Residents, Property Owners, and Business Owners:

Important events are occurring in the Palisade Avenue area. These events are at the request of your elected representatives to the City Council, and are the responsibility of the City Planning Division.

Many residents feel that Palisade Avenue has deteriorated in parts, and that something should be done do reinvigorate the area. A number of tools are available to the municipality to effect positive change in an area. One of those tools is a "Redevelopment Plan."

Misinformation is being distributed regarding the Redevelopment Planning process, and we feel that it is important to present the correct information so that the process and what it means is better understood.

A Redevelopment Plan is a set of regulations that dictates what can and cannot occur for a given area. For example, if a Redevelopment Plan permits high rise apartment towers, then they can be constructed. Conversely, if a Redevelopment Plan does not permit high rise apartment towers, then they cannot be built. Depending upon what is included in a Redevelopment Plan, it can serve to preserve an existing community by managing change.

It is true that a Redevelopment Plan enables the municipality, acting through the Redevelopment Agency, to acquire properties. The process requires negotiation to purchase the property first, and allows the use of eminent domain only as a last resort. However, you should know that the only properties that may be acquired through eminent domain are those properties that are designated or listed by a Redevelopment Plan for acquisition. In addition, it is often the case that there are no properties, or only a few properties, within a Redevelopment Plan that are designated or listed for acquisition. Should acquisition occur, then property owners are paid fair market value for their property, and residents receive money for relocation expenses, and other relocation assistance services. An appeals process ensures fairness and due process for both property owners and residents. In other words, the property owner can take the Redevelopment Agency to court and ask a judge to decide the value of the property.

The people who draft a Redevelopment Plan are the staff of the City Planning Division. Staff then presents a draft to the Planning Board, which then may refer it to the City Council (see attached sheet for further detail). All votes regarding a Redevelopment Plan are made at open public meetings, as required by law. In addition, it is the practice of the City Planning Division to do more than is required by law. As city planners, we are committed to working with residents and business owners early in the process, before we even go to the Planning Board. We work to ensure that the community has a voice, and that the best possible plan is adopted for the community.

A benefit of being in a Redevelopment Area is that development is more tightly controlled than otherwise occurs through the normal zoning ordinance. Redevelopment plans are generally more restrictive. Another benefit is that properties within a Redevelopment Area may be eligible for funding and tax incentives.

Included with this letter you will find a map of the Palisade Avenue Study Area that the City Council has directed us to examine, and a brief synopsis of the state enabling legislation that allows municipalities to create Redevelopment Plans.

The park was included within the boundary to increase its eligibility for federal funding. However, to be clear, the park will not be taken away from the community. The park will not be sold to developers, and will remain as a city park that is open to all residents.

Staff is currently in a preliminary information gathering phase. Once complete, we will present what we have gathered to the community, and solicit the community for additional items that we may have missed. This first community meeting will occur during the first half of January, and will be well advertised in the Palisade Avenue Study Area.

We are a staff of professionals who recognize that residents possess unique knowledge of the neighborhood in which they live, and that it is important to consider that unique knowledge when drafting a Redevelopment Plan. In some areas of the city, we have worked with a steering committee of individuals from the community to coordinate the planning process. In other areas of the city, we have conducted community-wide planning workshops to produce ideas for a Redevelopment Plan. We look forward to working with you in a similar fashion to make Palisade Avenue a better place.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Cotter, PP, AICP
Director

Douglas Greenfeld
Principal Planner

2 enclosures

G:\WPDOCS\palisade.doc

Redevelopment Planning Process Highlights

For full statutory requirements, refer to New Jersey Statute: P.L 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A)

Area in Need of Redevelopment

- City Council, by resolution, authorizes the Planning Board to conduct a study of existing conditions to determine whether or not a delineated "Study Area" should be declared an "area in need of redevelopment," pursuant to section 5 of P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A: 12A-5).

- The City Planning staff conducts the study on behalf of the Planning Board. Once the study is completed, staff presents it to the Planning Board at a public hearing, and recommends whether or not the Study Area, or any portion thereof, should be declared an "area in need of redevelopment." Notice of the public hearing includes publication twice in a local newspaper and certified mailings to property owners within the Study Area. At the public hearing, the Planning Board hears all persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Study Area, or a part thereof, be declared an "area in need of redevelopment."

- At the hearing, the Planning Board will take a vote to recommend to the City Council that the Study Area, or any part thereof, be declared or not be declared, by the City Council to be an "area in need of redevelopment."

- After the Planning Board hearing and recommendation, the City Council considers the recommendation in the form of a resolution. The Council has the authority to amend or revise any portion of the Planning Board's recommendation. If the City Council approves a resolution declaring an area to be "an area in need of redevelopment", then the Study Area becomes a Redevelopment Area, and is thereby eligible to have a Redevelopment Plan adopted to regulate development within the area.

Redevelopment Plan

- A Redevelopment Plan can only be adopted after a delineated area has been declared an "area in need of redevelopment" or "area in need of rehabilitation."

- The staff of the Division of City Planning prepares the Redevelopment Plan proposal. As part of the planning process, the City Planning staff generally seeks out and obtains input from the community. Preparation of the Redevelopment Plan proposal may happen concurrently with the preliminary investigation detailed above.

- The Redevelopment Plan may include strict provisions regarding permitted uses, building height, streetscape, parking, density, and other design elements, that supercede the standard city zoning ordinance. A variance from these provisions cannot be granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

- The Redevelopment Plan may designate properties that may be acquired by the Municipality to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan. If the area has been declared to be "in need of Redevelopment," private property may ultimately be acquired through eminent domain. If the area has been declared to be "in need of Rehabilitation," private property may only be acquired through negotiation. However, it is often the case that there are no properties, or only a few properties, within a Redevelopment Plan that are designated or listed for acquisition, and that the acquisition process is used selectively to address dilapidated or deteriorating structures within an otherwise healthy block.

- The Redevelopment Plan proposal is presented to the Planning Board at a public hearing. The Planning Board may amend the proposal, and may recommend that it be adopted by the City Council.

- If the Planning Board recommends that the Plan be adopted, then the City Council considers the recommendation. The City Council may amend the proposed Plan. If adopted, the Redevelopment Plan becomes an ordinance of the municipality.

Palisade Avenue Study Area Boundary Map

August 6, 1999

0 200 400 600 800 Feet

N W E S

Division of City Planning

Discuss the Revitalization of Palisade Avenue
at a Special RNA Meeting on Tuesday,
December 28th AT 7:00PM

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

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RNA

Vito Brunetti
Chairperson

Kevin Mahony
Vice-chairperson

Maria Tuzzo
Secretary

Beth D'Errico
Treasurer

Len Davis
Sgt. at Arms

COMING EVENTS

PALISADE AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT:

RNA announces two Public Meetings to discuss this important issue:

1) **RNA MEETING: Tuesday, December 28th at 7:00 PM**
LOCATION: THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER
FRANKLIN STREET AND OGDEN AVENUE

2) **PUBLIC HEARING: Wednesday, January 5th at 7:00 PM**
LOCATION: PUBLIC SCHOOL #8, AUDITORIUM
HANCOCK AVENUE AND FRANKLIN STREET

Enclosed in this newsletter is an explanation from the City Planning Division, a summary of the redevelopment statute and a map of the Palisade Avenue Study Area.